

Opportunities to Reduce Plastic Pollution:

Policy Recommendations and Best Practices for the Virginia Litter Fund



Clean Virginia Waterways wrote an in-depth examination of the funding sources for the Virginia Litter Control and Recycling Fund, as well as a comparative analysis of similar initiatives in other states and localities across the nation. This comprehensive analysis aims to provide policymakers, government officials, nonprofits, and citizens with valuable insights, best practices, and lessons learned from different approaches to tackling litter issues.

The full report is available at www.longwood.edu/cleanva/publications.html

Key Takeaways:

Litter taxes and fees are valuable tools to fund litter prevention programs and removal of litter once it has reached the environment.

Litter taxes are one prong of the multi-prong approach necessary to reduce the flow of plastic pollution and litter in our waterways and communities.

Litter taxes and associated programs cannot replace the necessary work of implementing proven policies to reduce plastic pollution such as recycling refunds programs (also known as “bottle bills”) and extended producer responsibility programs.

Virginia’s Litter Fund is extremely successful despite the fact that it generates the lowest revenue per capita of any state using a litter tax system.

Virginia is already struggling to deal with plastic pollution and is ill-equipped to handle the projected increase in plastic pollution.

There are multiple means to improve The Virginia Litter Control and Recycling Fund.

1. Tie the Virginia litter tax to inflation and adjust every 5 years.
2. Increase the percentage of the beer and wine cooler excise tax dedicated to the Litter Fund from 2% to 6%.
3. Include all non-alcoholic beverages in the soft drink excise tax and increase the rate at which the soft drink excise tax is imposed.
4. Provide exemptions for low volume/small businesses.
5. Allow nonprofit organizations and university/college researchers to apply for the competitive grants.
6. Add a \$0.50 cigarette litter abatement fee for every pack of cigarettes sold in Virginia.
7. Create and support a statewide litter prevention and “cover your load” campaign.

Since 1995, Clean Virginia Waterways has pursued successful initiatives on the full range of marine debris issues, from small cigarette butts to large vessels through research, cleanup events, and building collaborations.

Visit www.longwood.edu/cleanva for more information.